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Security Council

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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 1615 (2005) of 29 July 2005, by which the Council decided to extend the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 31 January 2006. It provides an update of the situation in Abkhazia, Georgia, since my report of 13 July 2005 (S/2005/453).

2. My Special Representative for Georgia, Heidi Tagliavini, continued to head UNOMIG. She was assisted in this task by the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak (Pakistan), who arrived at the Mission on 13 August. The strength of UNOMIG at 1 October 2005 stood at 121 military observers and 12 police officers (see annex).

II. Political process

3. Under the leadership of my Special Representative, UNOMIG continued its efforts to promote stability in the conflict zone and to advance the dialogue between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on political and security matters, the return of internally displaced persons and refugees and economic cooperation, as endorsed by the United Nations-chaired high-level meetings of the Group of Friends in Geneva (see S/2003/412, para. 3). Efforts in these areas, complemented by activities of the working groups established to implement the agreements reached between the Presidents of the Russian Federation and Georgia in Sochi in March 2003 (see S/2003/412, para. 5), seek to address pressing concerns of the parties and in this way to promote confidence between them with the ultimate aim of bringing about negotiations on a comprehensive political settlement of the conflict, using as a starting point the paper entitled "Basic Principles for the Distribution of Competences between Tbilisi and Sukhumi" and its transmittal letter (see S/2002/88, para. 3).

4. In pursuance of these goals, my Special Representative continued her regular political and operational contacts with both sides at the highest level. She also met regularly with the Group of Friends, including with the Russian Federation in its capacity as facilitator, in order to maintain their support for the Georgian-Abkhaz peace process. While such meetings took place mostly in Tbilisi, she also met, in

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September, in Moscow with the First Deputy Foreign Minister and Special Representative of the President of the Russian Federation for the Georgian-Abkhaz Settlement, and in Paris with senior German, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and French representatives. UNOMIG also continued to facilitate visits to the zone of conflict by senior representatives of the Group of Friends, including from France in July, the Tbilisi-based Ambassadors in August and Germany in September.

5. During the reporting period, my Special Representative focused in particular on achieving progress on the question of security guarantees. A planned meeting with the two sides on 22 July had to be postponed because the Abkhaz delegation cancelled its participation in protest over the detention on 3 July of a foreign cargo vessel en route to Sukhumi by the Georgian coast guard for violation of Georgian maritime space. My Special Representative offered her good offices to resolve this issue and following consultations with the two sides, including with President Saakashvili, the cargo was released by the Georgian authorities on 31 July and transported, with assistance from UNOMIG, to Sukhumi.

6. Subsequently, on 4 August, my Special Representative convened the fourth meeting of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides on security guarantees, with the participation of the Group of Friends and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) in Tbilisi. This was the first meeting on this issue since May 2004. The Georgian and Abkhaz delegations were led, respectively, by Giorgi Khaindrava, the Minister for Conflict Resolution of Georgia, and Sergei Shamba, the de facto Abkhaz Minister of Foreign Affairs. During the discussion, the parties agreed on the need to reconfirm, in the light of the change of leadership on both sides over the last two years, their commitment to the non-resumption of hostilities and for the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees, in the first instance to the Gali district in its old borders, as affirmed in the Yalta Declaration of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides (see S/2001/242, annex, and S/2001/401, para. 6). They discussed a draft joint document on the non-resumption of hostilities, which had been prepared by the Georgian side, and enhanced by comments from the Abkhaz side. At the margins of the meeting, they also discussed and confirmed their readiness to accept the proposals prepared by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) on the registration of returnees in the Gali district and its strategy paper for returns (see S/2005/453, para. 5).

7. At the meeting on 4 August, the sides also addressed maritime security issues (see S/2004/822, para. 8) and, notwithstanding their differences, reconfirmed their commitment to the 1994 Moscow agreement, the need to refrain from the threat or use of force and to seek solutions through negotiations, involving international expertise as required. They agreed to continue discussions on maritime issues and to submit their views and proposals to UNOMIG prior to the next meeting, tentatively planned for late October.

8. Subsequently, on 10 August, the Tbilisi-based Ambassadors of the Group of Friends visited Sukhumi to discuss the results of the meeting on security guarantees and to encourage the Abkhaz leadership to engage meaningfully on the priority areas of the peace process. They also supported efforts by my Special Representative to reach agreement with the Abkhaz side on the modalities for the opening of a human rights sub-office in Gali (see S/2001/59, annex II) and

deployment of UNOMIG civilian police officers in the Gali sector (see S/2003/751, para. 19). The Abkhaz side, however, was still not ready to move on these two issues and, likewise, restated its position on the issue of status, citing its unilateral proclamation of independence of 1999 (see S/1999/1087, para. 7).

9. As a follow-up to the meetings of the so-called Sochi working group on the rehabilitation of the Sochi-Tbilisi railway on 15 June in Moscow and on 2 July at UNOMIG sector headquarters in Gali (see S/2005/453, paras. 5 and 6), the Mission helped to arrange two expert-level meetings in Tbilisi and Sukhumi, on 11 and 19 July, respectively, to discuss further the modalities of the technical survey of the Psou-Inguri section of the railway.

10. Following these meetings, Russian and Abkhaz specialists commenced the survey on 10 August. However, contrary to what had been agreed, Georgian experts were not able to join as the Abkhaz side denied clearance for their participation on the ground that some of them were internally displaced persons. Following further discussions, facilitated by my Special Representative, Georgian experts are now expected to join Abkhaz and Russian experts later in October to finalize the survey work.

11. The resolution of the question of the composition of the expert group for the railroad survey paved the way for the meeting of the Sochi working group on the return of internally displaced persons and refugees that took place in Sochi on 6 and 7 October under the chairmanship of the Russian Federation and with the participation of my Special Representative and UNHCR. At the meeting the parties endorsed, in principle, the UNHCR approach to the return of refugees and internally displaced persons and its planned activities for the next two years. They also discussed modalities of the envisaged registration of the returnees in the Gali district as well as the issue of language of instruction in the schools there.

12. Between December 2004 and June 2005, the Ministry of Refugees and Accommodation of Georgia, with financial and technical support from UNHCR, verified the number of internally displaced persons in Georgia. According to the results, which were made public on 25 August, the number of internally displaced persons in Georgia had decreased since November 2004 from 241,032 to 214,018, with 201,634 of them being from Abkhazia, Georgia.

13. In other developments, the Georgian side protested the large-scale Abkhaz military exercises held from 15 to 19 August, drawing attention to the impact of what it called the militarization of and outside support for such activities in the conflict-ridden regions of Georgia. For its part, the Abkhaz side continued to question the peaceful intentions of Tbilisi and reiterated its intention to seek closer relations with the Russian Federation. In his statement to the General Assembly on 15 September, President Saakashvili appealed to the United Nations to put an end to "the forcible annexation of Abkhazia" and expressed his hope that Georgia and the Russian Federation would cooperate in the peaceful settlement of conflicts in Georgia. On 11 October, the Parliament of Georgia adopted a resolution providing for the possible start of the withdrawal of peacekeeping forces from the Georgian-South Ossetian and Georgian-Abkhaz conflict zones during 2006.

14. From 7 to 11 September, UNOMIG facilitated a visit to Sukhumi by a team from the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) to inspect the storage of radioactive material at the Institute of Physics and Technology and the Research

Institute of Experimental Pathology and Therapy. The Georgian and the Abkhaz sides welcomed the IAEA inspection and expressed their readiness for further cooperation with IAEA, which could contribute to building confidence between them.

III. Operational activities

15. UNOMIG military observers continued to perform their mandated tasks by conducting daily ground patrols and liaison with local authorities and coordinating with the collective peacekeeping force of the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), as well as law enforcement agencies from both sides.

16. During the reporting period, three violations of the 1994 Moscow Agreement on a Ceasefire and Separation of Forces were reported on the Abkhaz side of the ceasefire line. Two of them were restrictions of movement for UNOMIG patrols by Abkhaz soldiers, on 16 July at an observation post in the restricted weapons zone and on 2 August at the main Inguri river bridge. The third violation was the presence of six tanks and several artillery pieces during the Abkhaz military exercises in August (see para. 13 above) in the Ochamchira training area, which partially overlaps the restricted weapons zone; UNOMIG had been notified in advance and its military observers were present intermittently during the exercise. In addition, on 29 July, UNOMIG issued a violation report for the establishment of an Abkhaz "taxation" post 50 metres from a CIS peacekeeping force checkpoint in violation of the 12 May 2005 Gali Protocol (see S/2005/453, para. 4).

17. The weekly quadripartite meetings allowed the two sides, together with UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force, regularly to discuss security-related matters in the zone of conflict. Among other matters, the meetings addressed the Abkhaz detention on 20 July of 19 residents from both sides of the ceasefire line on charges of illegally crossing the line and wood cutting. Seven ethnic Abkhaz detainees were released within a few days, and the others on 24 September, following a trial held in Gali. They also discussed the Abkhaz military exercise and the delimitation of the restricted weapons zone. In addition, they took up the detention by the Georgian police, on 12 and 31 August, of trucks from the CIS peacekeeping force transporting goods from the Abkhaz side of the ceasefire line. The CIS peacekeeping force protested the seizures as a violation of its freedom of movement. These cases were also subject of investigations by the Joint Fact-finding Group, which is composed of the two parties, UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force, and is tasked to establish whether violent incidents constitute violations of the 1994 Moscow agreement. During the period under review, the Group investigated three new cases and concluded the investigation of three other cases. For two of them, the motives could not be established, whereas the third was assessed as criminal in nature.

Gali sector

18. The military situation in the Gali sector remained generally calm. During the reporting period two Abkhaz militia posts and four security posts were newly established in the lower Gali area. However, despite this increased presence, the hazelnut harvest season led to an upsurge in criminal activities, including 3 shooting incidents, 1 killing, 4 abductions and 40 armed robberies. Heightened tension was

observed among the local population in response to illegal tax collection and extortion by de facto Abkhaz officials. Following the conclusion of the hazelnut harvest, the crime rate receded.

Zugdidi sector

19. The military situation in the Zugdidi sector remained relatively calm. During the reporting period, 1 shooting, 14 robberies, 3 abductions and 1 demonstration were recorded. On 9 July, a UNOMIG vehicle was damaged by a stone thrown by a local resident in Zugdidi town. A number of incidents during the reporting period indicate friction between the CIS peacekeeping force and the Georgian side, including the detention of trucks from the CIS peacekeeping force (see para. 17), the temporary detainment of a CIS peacekeeping force soldier, the installation of electricity meters at CIS peacekeeping force checkpoints and a demonstration protesting the presence of the CIS peacekeeping force in Georgia. Georgia also criticized the CIS peacekeeping force for delaying humanitarian aid lorries en route to the upper Kodori Valley at its checkpoints. On 26 August, a small arms and ammunition cache was discovered by the police in the village of Pirveli Maisi in the restricted weapons zone.

Kodori Valley

20. The situation in the Kodori Valley remained unchanged. On 22 September, UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force conducted a joint patrol in the Abkhaz-controlled lower Kodori Valley and reported the situation there as calm. Patrolling of the upper Kodori Valley remained suspended pending the provision of adequate security guarantees from the Georgian side. Negotiations continue with the Georgian authorities to ensure the resumption of patrols to the upper Kodori Valley as soon as possible.

IV. Policing issues

21. The UNOMIG police component continued to operate on the Zugdidi side of the ceasefire line and maintained good cooperation with local law local enforcement agencies there. The de facto Abkhaz authorities remained reluctant to allow the deployment of UNOMIG police advisers on the Gali side of the ceasefire line, which continued to hamper cross ceasefire line cooperation, hinder progress in criminal investigations and limit the effectiveness of preventive anti-crime efforts. UNOMIG police, however, continued to contribute to the weekly quadripartite meetings and investigations of the Joint Fact-Finding Group, including by providing forensic assistance.

22. During the reporting period, UNOMIG police concentrated on on-the-job field training for police officers on the Zugdidi side. In addition, it held various training courses and facilitated courses by outside experts. It also continued its participation in working groups on crime prevention and assisted in the foundation of an Association of Women Police in the region. UNOMIG handed over to the Zugdidi law enforcement agencies equipment donated by the Government of Switzerland, with a similar amount of equipment being reserved for the Gali law enforcement agencies.

V. Cooperation with the collective peacekeeping forces of the Commonwealth of Independent States

23. Close cooperation between UNOMIG and the CIS peacekeeping force continued through regular liaison visits, the weekly quadripartite meetings, information exchanges and joint patrols. UNOMIG also cooperated with the CIS peacekeeping force in a demining operation in Ochamchira on 2 August. The Mission and the peacekeeping force conducted joint patrols on 5 July in the Gali district, on 21 August in the Zugdidi sector (together with the Georgian side) and on 22 September in the lower Kodori Valley. In an effort to enhance its capability to respond to emergencies, the CIS peacekeeping force held command and staff exercises from 13 to 16 September.

VI. Human rights and the humanitarian situation

24. The United Nations human rights office in Abkhazia, Georgia, continued to implement its programme for the protection and promotion of human rights (see S/1996/284, annex I). Within its protection mandate, the office gathered information from victims, witnesses and other reliable sources and followed up on individual cases in areas of due process, impunity, treatment of detainees, involuntary disappearances, forced labour, arbitrary evictions and property rights violations. The office faced increasing difficulties during its regular monitoring visits to detention centres and on a number of occasions human rights officers were denied access to detainees. When access was granted, the office observed substandard conditions, in particular in pre-trial custody. The office continued to monitor court trials and provide legal advisory services to the local population.

25. The de facto Abkhaz authorities, despite earlier positive indications, have not yet agreed to the opening of a UNOMIG human rights sub-office in the town of Gali, which would enhance the ability of the office to protect the human rights of the local population, including returnees, in the zone of conflict.

26. In fulfilling its capacity-building mandate, the human rights office, in cooperation with a local non-governmental organization (NGO), completed a project aimed at raising awareness of children's rights, funded by Switzerland. The office continued to cooperate with other international partners, such as OSCE and the European Commission, in facilitating and promoting their human rights activities aimed at building capacity in the civil society.

27. With the commencement of the new school year, the issue of the language of education in the Gali district came once again to the forefront. At the end of August, the de facto Education Department of the Gali district instructed school directors to use the Russian language in all grades. Some of the native Georgian teachers, who could not meet this requirement, had to leave and no new Russian-speaking teachers were recruited. Thus, with reduced staff, some of the schools in the Gali district were able to provide only the bare minimum of education.

28. United Nations agencies and international and non-governmental organizations continued to assist vulnerable groups affected by the conflict on the Abkhaz side of the ceasefire line. In health and education sectors, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) continued to provide medicine, testing kits and equipment to

Abkhaz hospitals, as well as implement free health services and a tuberculosis treatment programme. The World Food Programme continued to provide food assistance in connection with the tuberculosis programme of Médecins sans frontières. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), in cooperation with UNOMIG, completed preparatory work for a rehabilitation and economic recovery programme, and for the support to public health and basic services, in the Gali, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira and Zugdidi districts, including establishing an information centre to improve coordination of assistance provided by international and local organizations. This is part of a joint UNOMIG-UNDP programme funded by the European Commission (see para. 30 below). UNHCR and UNICEF continued to rehabilitate schools and distributed educational materials with the assistance of UNOMIG. The United Nations Volunteers programme distributed educational materials, including on language, computer and business education, as well as for education in basic humanitarian law. OSCE provided training to Georgian and Abkhaz language teachers. International NGOs, such as Première Urgence, Accion contra el Hambre, the Norwegian and Danish Refugee Councils and World Vision, carried out small-scale rehabilitation and community development projects. The International Committee of the Red Cross was also active in the area, as was the NGO Conciliation Resources, which organized a summer university course on international affairs and conflict resolution in Pitsunda.

29. UNOMIG contributed to the efforts aimed at improving the living conditions of the conflict-affected local population through its quick-impact projects and related activities. During the reporting period, contributions for this purpose were made by the United Kingdom, Finland, Italy and the Netherlands. The increased participation of the local authorities on both sides of the ceasefire line in the implementation of these projects was particularly noticeable in recent months.

30. On 30 September, my Special Representative, the Head of the European Commission delegation to Georgia and Armenia and the UNDP Resident Representative in Georgia signed a memorandum of understanding on the funding and implementation of the two-year rehabilitation programme for the Gali, Tkvarcheli, Ochamchira and Zugdidi districts. The programme is funded by the European Commission with a budget of 3.8 million euros. Its first phase will comprise rehabilitation projects in the health and infrastructure sectors to be implemented by UNOMIG and UNDP. UNOMIG also assisted other potential donors to carry out needs assessments for additional contributions in health, education and infrastructure sectors within the zone of conflict.

VII. Support issues

31. A long-standing issue was brought to conclusion when the Parliament of Georgia ratified on 16 July the supplemental agreement to the 1994 Status of Mission Agreement between the United Nations and the Government of Georgia. The agreement exempts UNOMIG from the payment of air navigation and other related charges, such as landing and parking fees, and is expected to prevent interruptions to the Mission's operational flights.

32. Starting on 1 September, the Government of Georgia closed the airport at Senaki for UNOMIG flights because of other governmental requirements. Georgia offered an alternative airport, near Kutaisi, which is farther away from the

UNOMIG area of operation and would have substantially increased flying time and mission support costs. After consultations between my Special Representative and Georgian representatives, including with President Saakashvili, UNOMIG was notified on 15 September that it would be able to use Senaki airport until the end of 2005, during which time some other mutually acceptable solution would be developed.

33. The Mission continued to raise awareness among staff of relevant United Nations rules and regulations on the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. In particular, it conducted extensive training in all locations, strengthened its focal point network and maintained close contact with the relevant Secretariat offices in New York.

VIII. Observations

34. The United Nations is committed to assisting the efforts of the Georgian and Abkhaz sides to build confidence between them and to help them advance towards a lasting and comprehensive political settlement. In this connection, the resumption of dialogue between the two sides in the three priority areas of the peace process, in particular on security matters, is a welcome development. It is to be hoped that the sides will be able to reach a high level reconfirmation of their commitments to the non-resumption of hostilities and to the safe and dignified return of internally displaced persons and refugees. Such a commitment would reinvigorate the negotiation process and help sustain the renewed dialogue, which remains uneven. The continuing engagement of the Group of Friends in support of my Special Representative and UNOMIG continues to be invaluable.

35. At the same time, it is essential that the resumed dialogue between the parties translate into tangible improvements on the ground. Concrete progress in the peace process is contingent on the political will of the sides and their ability to credibly commit themselves without preconditions. Both sides need to refrain from actions or statements which are detrimental to emerging opportunities for pragmatic progress in the peace process. I urge the Georgian side to address the Abkhaz security concerns and urge the Abkhaz side to meet practical and security concerns of the local population in the Gali district. I particularly urge the Abkhaz side to honour its previous commitments and to allow the opening of a human rights sub-office in Gali, to permit the teaching of local youth in their native Georgian language and to accept the deployment of UNOMIG police officers in the Gali district.

36. The security of United Nations personnel remains a primary concern, and I once again urge both sides to ensure the safety and security of UNOMIG personnel throughout the zone of conflict. There is no better way to demonstrate this commitment than by identifying and bringing to justice the perpetrators of criminal acts against UNOMIG and its personnel, including those responsible for the shooting down of a UNOMIG helicopter in the Kodori Valley in October 2001, the ambush of a UNOMIG bus in Sukhumi in September 1998 and various hostage-takings over the past years. Viable security guarantees by both sides are also important in order to allow the Mission to resume regular patrolling throughout the Kodori Valley, which remains an essential part of the UNOMIG mandate.

37. In conclusion, I would like to commend my Special Representative, Heidi Tagliavini, for her leadership of UNOMIG and her untiring efforts to facilitate a comprehensive settlement of the conflict. I am also grateful to the Chief Military Observer, Major General Niaz Muhammad Khan Khattak, and all the men and women of UNOMIG for their consistent and courageous efforts, in what is often a precarious and volatile environment.

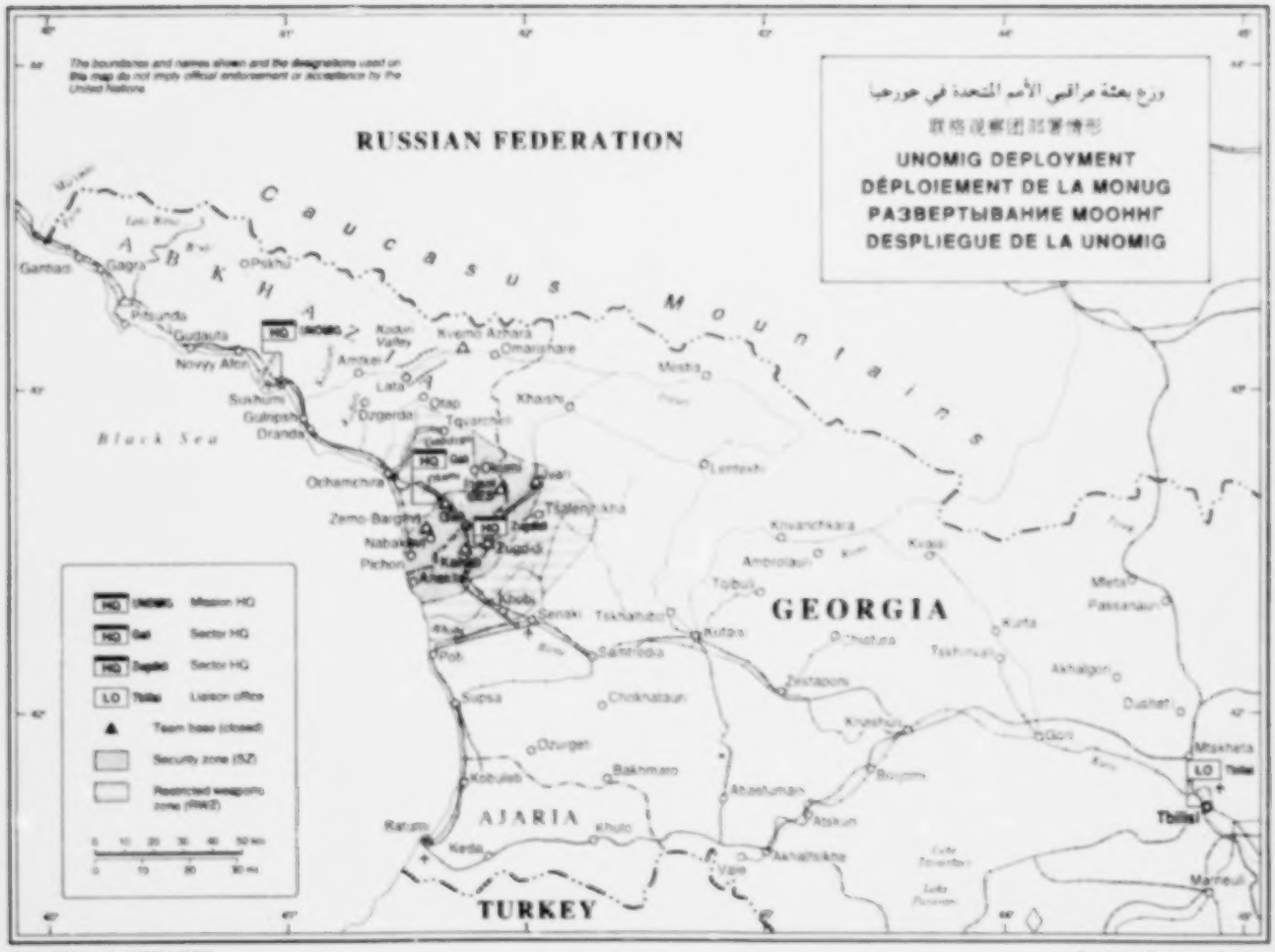
Annex

Countries providing military observers and civilian police personnel (as at 1 October 2005)

Country	*Military observers*
Albania	3
Austria	2
Bangladesh	7
Croatia	1
Czech Republic	5
Denmark	5
Egypt	5
France	3
Germany	12
Greece	5
Hungary	2
Indonesia	4
Jordan	8
Pakistan	9[a]
Poland	5
Republic of Korea	7
Romania	1
Russian Federation	3
Sweden	3
Switzerland	4
Turkey	5
Ukraine	5
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	7
United States of America	2
Uruguay	3
Total	**121**

[a] Including the Chief Military Observer

Country	*Civilian police personnel*
Germany	3
Ghana	1
Hungary	1
India	1
Poland	1
Russian Federation	2
Switzerland	3
Total	**12**



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Follow-up to the outcome of the Millennium Summit

Letter dated 17 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour, in my capacity as Chairman of the Organization of the Islamic Conference Group in New York, to transmit herewith the final communiqué of the annual coordination meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 September 2005 (see annex).

I should be grateful if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda items 9, 12, 14, 15, 17, 19, 24, 25, 27, 30, 31, 32, 33, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 46, 50, 51, 52, 54, 56, 66, 69, 70, 71, 73, 74, 84, 89, 90, 94, 97, 100, 103, 108, 110, 115, 116, 117, 118, 119 and 120, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Abdullah M. **Alsaidi**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative

Annex to the letter dated 17 October 2005 from the Permanent Representative of Yemen to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, English and French]

Final communiqué of the annual coordination meeting of Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Organization of the Islamic Conference

United Nations Headquarters, New York
23 September 2005-19 Shaa'ban 1426

The Ministers of Foreign Affairs of the OIC Member States held their Annual Coordination Meeting at the United Nations Headquarters in New York on 23 September 2005, under the chairmanship of His Excellency Ambassador Abdullah Alsaidi, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Yemen to the United Nations. His Excellency Ambassador Ibrahim Jambari, Assistant Secretary General for Political Affairs, attended the meeting representing the UN Secretary General. The Meeting, after deliberation, adopted the following:

1. The Meeting emphasized its strong conviction about the central role that the United Nations, as the only universal multilateral organization, can and should play in strengthening global coordination and cooperation in dealing with global challenges and threats, and reaffirmed the determination of the OIC Member States to actively work with the United Nations along this line in accordance with its Charter. In this regard, the Meeting also reiterated that the United Nations is regarded by the OIC as an indispensable global mechanism for the promotion of a shared vision of a more secure and prosperous world. It, further, underscored that multilateralism and collective approaches, in accordance with international law and the Charter of the United Nations, are essential tools in addressing the common threats and challenges.

2. The Meeting expressed its rejection of unilateralism, which could lead to the erosion and violation of international law, to the use and threat of use of force and to pressure and coercion, including unilateral sanctions, by certain countries as a means to achieve their political agenda.

3. The Meeting reaffirmed its resolve to contribute effectively to the maintenance and promotion of regional and global peace and security, to preserve peace and security of all OIC Member States, to reject and condemn all campaigns of hostility and defamation against Islam, the Muslim communities and the Islamic countries, and to extend its full support and solidarity to Islamic countries facing external pressure, threats and interference in their domestic affairs, and called for the settlement of disputes between States by dialogue on the basis of international law and the respect for the principles of sovereignty and non-interference in the internal affairs of the States. It also emphasized the need for greater cooperation, coordination and consultation and for a common stance in international fora.

4. The Meeting underlined the considerable impact of development on global peace, prosperity, security and stability, and stressed the value of dialogue, understanding and mutual respect among religions, cultures and civilizations. In this context, the Meeting reaffirmed the commitments made by the OIC Member States in accordance with the Putrajaya Declaration adopted at the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference to continue efforts aimed at strengthening their bonds of unity and cohesion, expanding cooperation in all areas, and participating collectively in the global decision-making process. It also recalled the commitment of the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) that the OIC Member States would assist each other in their progress and reform, which should come from within, and the OIC, as an institution, would also develop ways and means for supporting progress in a collective framework.

5. The Meeting underscored the necessity for a viable strategy which should aim at creating and promoting mutual understanding, tolerance and harmony among different religions and civilizations. The Meeting also highlighted the strength of the spiritual values of the Islamic World with which the universal values of freedom, democracy, peace; justice and prosperity are in harmony. In this regard, the Meeting recalled the following initiatives from the Islamic World: Dialogue among Civilizations-Iran; Religious and Cultural Understanding, Harmony and Cooperation-Pakistan; International Decade for a Culture of Peace and Nonviolence for the Children of the World, 2001-2010-Bangladesh; Seminar on Islam and the West-Qatar; OIC-EU Joint Forum "Civilization and Harmony; The Political Dimension"-Turkey; the International Conference of Islamic Scholars-Indonesia, Declaration of the First Congress of Leaders of World and Traditional Religions-Kazakhstan, Alliance of Civilizations-co-sponsored by Turkey, and the International Conference on Islamic-Christian Dialogue in 2006 (Senegal).

6. The Meeting took note of the launch of the initiative of Alliance of Civilizations, which is co-sponsored by Turkey. The Meeting also took note of the announcement by the United Nations Secretary-General regarding the establishment of a High-Level Group within the framework of the Alliance of Civilizations.

7. The Meeting expressed hope that the UN General Assembly would review the implementation of the Global Agenda for Dialogue among Civilizations and its Programme of Action during its current Session. In this regard, the Meeting highlighted the contribution made by the Organization of the Islamic Conference and its Member States, some of which are reflected in the reports of the OIC Member States, OIC General Secretariat, and the Islamic Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (ISESCO), with a view to improving the respective report of the UN Secretary-General to the sixtieth session of the General Assembly. The Meeting took cognizance of the adoption of "Tehran Declaration" [A/59/825] by the International Conference on Environment, Peace, and the Dialogue among Civilizations and Cultures, (Tehran, May 9-10, 2005) as well as the International Conference of UNESCO on the Dialogue among Civilizations, Cultures and Peoples [A/60/77], held at UNESCO Headquarters on 5 April 2005. In this regard, the Meeting welcomed and supported the intention of H.E. Mr. Mohammad Khatami, the then President of

the Islamic Republic of Iran, to establish a Centre for Dialogue among Civilizations, and expressed the readiness of the relevant bodies of the OIC System for close cooperation with that Centre in realizing its objectives.

8. The Meeting paid special tribute to the President of Pakistan, General Pervez Musharraf, for his timely and important initiative on "Enlightened Moderation" which was adopted by the 10th Islamic Summit Conference through its resolution no. 45/10-P(IS). The Meeting also paid special tribute to the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, for the timely and important initiative on "Islam Hadhari" (Civilizational Islam). The Meeting commended the Commission of Eminent Persons (CEP) for its work and welcomed its recommendations on developing the political, economic, security, cultural and social conditions in the Islamic World. It expressed the hope that the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference, to be held later this year in Makkah, would consider and adopt the Commission's recommendations, thereby enabling the Secretary General and the Member States to faithfully and expeditiously implement them. In this connection, the Meeting paid special tribute to the Government of Malaysia for hosting the Inaugural Meeting of the CEP in Putrajaya on 27-29 January 2005, and to the Government of Pakistan for hosting the second meeting of the CEP in Islamabad on 28-29 May 2005, which presented the set of recommendations for the consideration and approval of the Extraordinary Islamic Summit Conference.

9. The Meeting reaffirmed the centrality of the cause of Al-Quds Al-Sharif for the whole Islamic Ummah. It affirmed the Arab nature of East Jerusalem and the need to defend the sanctity of Islamic and Christian holy places. It reiterated its condemnation of the attempts by Israel, the occupying Power, to change the status, demographic composition and the character of East Jerusalem, in particular by its unlawful colonization practices, including its settlement activities and construction of the Wall in and around the City.

10. The Meeting reaffirmed its principled support for the right of the Palestinian people to national independence and the exercise of sovereignty in their State, Palestine, with Al-Quds al-Sharif as its capital. It reaffirmed the rights of the Palestine refugees in accordance with international law and General Assembly resolution 194(III) of 11 December 1948. The Meeting reiterated its solidarity with the Palestinian people in their struggle to achieve self-determination led by their legitimate national leadership.

11. The Meeting strongly condemned the continuing illegal Israeli policies and practices in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds Al-Sharif. It condemned in particular the wilful killing of Palestinian civilians, including extra-judicial executions; the wanton destruction of homes, infrastructure and agricultural lands; the detention and imprisonment of thousands of Palestinians; and the imposition of collective punishment on the entire Palestinian population, including severe restrictions on the movement of persons and good, including prolonged curfews.

12. The Meeting also strongly condemned the illegal Israeli policy and practice of colonization of the Palestinian land through its settlement activities and construction of the expansionist Wall, which has involved the confiscation of thousands of more dunums of Palestinian land, the isolation of dozens of Palestinian villages, towns and cities and the extensive destruction of property and the livelihoods of thousands of Palestinian civilians. The Meeting viewed such illegal activities as tantamount to de facto annexation of large parts of the Palestinian territory, which would render impossible to realize the establishment of the State of Palestine.

13. The Meeting noted with regret the negative and defiant response by Israel to the Advisory Opinion rendered on 9 July 2004 by the International Court of Justice, its non-compliance with General Assembly resolution ES-10/15 of 20 July 2004, and its continued construction of the Wall in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including in and around East Jerusalem. The Meeting, thus, called once again for respect of the Advisory Opinion and the implementation of resolution ES-10/15 and encouraged all States to impose punitive measures against those entities and companies contributing to the construction of the Wall and against settlements products, settlers and all those profiting from any illegal activities in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including Al-Quds. The Meeting also called for the following specific actions:

a) At the United Nations, further measures should be taken, in accordance with operative paragraph 5 of resolution ES-10/15, and also called on the Security Council to undertake its responsibilities by adopting a clear resolution and undertaking necessary measures in this regard. The Secretary-General of the United Nations should also expedite the work with regard to the request made by the General Assembly in resolution ES-10/15 to establish a register of damage caused by the Wall and to ensure that the positions and documents of the UN Secretariat are fully consistent with the Advisory Opinion.

b) With regard to Member States, the Meeting called upon them to undertake measures, including by means of legislation collectively, regionally and individually, to prevent any products of the illegal Israeli settlements from entering their markets consistent with the obligations under international treaties, to decline entry to Israeli settlers and to impose sanctions against companies and entities involved in the construction of the wall and other illegal action in the Occupied Palestinian Territory.

c) With regard to the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention, the Meeting called on them to adhere to Article 1 common to the four Geneva Conventions and to undertake measures to ensure compliance by Israel with the Convention.

14. The Meeting welcomed the adoption by the General Assembly of resolution 58/292, of 6 May 2004, on the "Status of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem", and stressed the need for follow-up in

ensuring that Israeli credentials to the United Nations do not cover the territories occupied by Israel since 1967, including East Jerusalem.

15. The Meeting reaffirmed its support for a comprehensive peace, based on relevant United Nations resolutions, including Security Council resolutions 242 (1967), 338 (1973), 1397 (2002) and 1515 (2003) as well as agreed principles, which call for Israel's complete withdrawal from the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including the City of Al-Quds Al-Sharif, and all other occupied Arab territories. In this context, the Meeting reiterated its endorsement of the Arab Peace Initiative as adopted by the Fourteenth Arab Summit, held in Beirut, Lebanon, on 28 March 2002.

16. The Meeting expressed the hope that the international community and the Quartet would undertake the necessary efforts to salvage the Road Map and implement its provisions towards its stated aims and goals in accordance with international law. It expressed concern at repeated Israeli attempts to evade the Road Map and to substitute it with different steps.

17. The Meeting stressed that the withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and the dismantling of the settlements is a promising step, and emphasized that the withdrawal should be complete and irreversible, should be accompanied by similar steps in the West Bank, and should be part of and consistent with the Road Map. In this regard, the Meeting stressed the need and importance of the construction and operation of the airport and seaport in Gaza and the establishment of the safe passage (a permanent geographical link) between the West Bank and Gaza.

18. The Meeting reiterated the proposal endorsed by the OIC and the Non-Aligned Movement countries to convene a conference for International and Regional Organizations on the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The purpose of this conference will be to reaffirm the basic principles for the peaceful settlement of the conflict, and to explore was and means to establish in 2006 an independent Palestinian State on the basis of 1967 borders as stipulated in the Road Map plan.

19. The Meeting stressed the need for the OIC, at all levels, to continue practical and political support for the just resolution of the Question of Palestine. It commended the efforts made by Al-Quds Committee, under the chairmanship of His Majesty King Mohammed VI of Morocco, to safeguard the Arab Islamic identity of Al-Quds Al-Sharif and it also commended the OIC Committee on Palestine for its work.

20. The Meeting, recalling resolution 5/32-PAL of the 32nd Session of the ICFM (Sana'a June 2005), and taking into account the situation prevailing in the occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and the grave violations of the international humanitarian law that continue to be perpetrated by Israel, the occupying Power, reiterated the position of the Member States of the OIC which calls for the postponement of the proposed Diplomatic Conference to adopt a Third Additional Protocol to the Geneva Convention relating to the adoption of an additional distinctive emblem.

21. The Meeting strongly condemned Israel's policy of refusing to comply with Security Council resolution 497 (1981) concerning the occupied Syrian Golan and its policies of annexation, building of colonial settlements, confiscation of land, diversion of water sources and imposition of Israeli nationality upon Syrian citizens. It also demanded Israel to completely withdraw from the occupied Syrian Golan to the June 4th 1967 lines in accordance with Security Council resolutions 242 (1967) and 338 (1973), the principle of land for peace, the Madrid Peace Conference terms of reference and the Arab Peace Initiative, adopted by the Beirut Arab Summit on 28 March 2002. The meeting also demanded Israel to release all Syrian detainees citizens of the Syrian occupied Golan, taking into consideration that some of them have been detained for more than 20 years.

22. The Meeting condemned threats against some Member States, particularly the Syrian Arab Republic, and condemned the decision of the US Administration to impose unilateral economic sanctions against Syria. It also condemned the so-called "Syria Accountability Act". It urged Member States to further strengthen their brotherly ties with Syria in all fields.

23. The Meeting supported Lebanon in its efforts to complete the liberation of all its remaining territories under Israeli occupation including Shab'a farms, and urged the United Nations to compel Israel to pay reparations for all the losses it has inflicted, or caused, as a result of its persistent aggression against Lebanon. It further supported Lebanon in its demands for the removal of the mines left behind by the Israeli occupation, which planted these mines and therefore bears the responsibility for removing them. It also supported the inalienable rights of Lebanon to utilize its waters in accordance with international law and condemned Israel's designs on these waters. It held Israel responsible for any action such as infringing upon Lebanon's sovereignty, its political independence, the safety of its people, or the integrity of its territories, and in this regard, the Meeting condemned the continuing Israeli violations of the Lebanese sovereignty. It demanded the international community to take all necessary measures to compel Israel to immediately cease these violations and release all the remaining Lebanese prisoners and abductees detained in Israeli prisons. It reaffirmed the right of the Palestine refugees to return to their homes, and rejected settling them in Lebanon.

24. The Meeting welcomed United Nations Security Council resolution 1546 of 8 June 2004 which provided the basis for the ending of the occupation and assumption of responsibility by the Iraqi Sovereign Government in accordance with the timetable proposed for Iraq's political process. It noted with satisfaction the important role assigned to the United Nations under that resolution.

25. The Meeting reaffirmed the imperative of respect by all for the sovereignty, political independence, national unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. It emphasized the right of the Iraqi people to freely determine their own political future and effectively control their own natural resources.

26. The Meeting condemned the terrorist acts perpetrated against Iraqi people, their places of worship, religious sites, police stations and the governmental institutions, including the health, public utility institutions, and also against diplomatic institutions and diplomats, diplomatic personnel and premises. The Meeting also underlined the necessity for all parties, including the multinational forces to respect the civil and religious rights of the Iraqi people, as well as the preservation of the religious sites, and cultural and historical heritage of Iraq.

27. The Meeting also condemned all calls based on sectarianism which cause discord among the Iraqi people, and most particularly the recent calls launched by the terrorist groups for Iraqis to fight against each other.

28. The Meeting reaffirmed the urgent necessity of eliminating all terrorist and other armed groups present and emanating from Iraqi territory which constitute a danger to security and stability of Iraq and its neighbouring States.

29. The Meeting strongly condemned and deplored all acts of kidnapping and assassination directed against Iraqis and nationals of other countries.

30. The Meeting welcomed the announcement by Iraq to establish good relations between Iraq and its neighbouring States, based on mutual respect and principle of non interference in their internal affairs, as well as to abide by the existing treaties and agreements, particularly those relevant to internationally recognized borders, and invited Iraq and its neighbouring countries to actively cooperate to promote peace and stability in the region.

31. The Meeting called upon Iraq's neighbouring countries to increase their cooperation with the Government of Iraq on the overall border security, including effective monitoring of the borders, strict controls at entry points and cross border movements and exchange of intelligence with Iraq, with the primary aim of stemming terrorist and other illegal infiltration to and from Iraq.

32. The Meeting condemned the inhuman practices and abuses committed against the Iraqi detainees at Abu-Gharaib prison, and at the other prisons and detention centers in Iraq. It demanded that those responsible be tried by appropriate judicial processes that conform to international standards in accordance with international humanitarian law, including the Geneva Conventions.

33. The Meeting called upon all the Member States to cooperate and to coordinate their efforts to combat the illegal trade and trafficking in Iraqi antiques, and help return those recovered to the Iraqi museums.

34. The Meeting called upon the Member States to provide all forms of support and assistance to meet Iraq needs and facilitate contributions and efforts designated to reactivate its organizational bodies, and economic institutions and infrastructures. The Meeting also urged the donors and the international community to take immediate steps to meet the obligations pledged in the Madrid Conference (2003) and to increase their contribution in

the reconstruction and development of Iraqi economy. The Meeting also welcomed the commitment of the Paris Club to reduce substantially Iraq's sovereign debt and urged the other creditors to take similar decisions.

35. The Meeting condemned strongly the killing of Kuwaiti and Iranian Prisoners of War and third-country nationals by the former Iraqi regime; the Meeting also condemned the concealment of these crimes for over a decade by the former Iraqi regime, which is considered a violation of international humanitarian law. It called for the necessity of bringing the perpetrators of these crimes against humanity to trial.

36. The Meeting condemned the mass killings of innocent Iraqis by the former regime and considered these as a crime against humanity. The Meeting demanded the trial of those responsible and called upon Member States and the international community not to provide refuge to officials of the former regime, who have committed such crimes against Iraqis and others.

37. The Meeting called on Member States that have pledged donations to the Afghan People Assistance Fund to expedite the remittance of their donations, in order to strengthen the Fund's resources to help it achieve its noble humanitarian goals for which it was established. It also appealed to the international community to provide the assistance it has pledged for Afghanistan during the Tokyo and Berlin Donor Conferences.

38. The Meeting reaffirmed its support to the people of Jammu and Kashmir for their legitimate right to self-determination in accordance with the relevant UN resolutions and the aspirations of the Kashmiri people. It called for respect of the human rights of the Kashmiri people and the ending of their continuous violations. It urged India to end human rights violations against the Kashmiri people, and allow international human rights organizations to verify the condition of human rights in Indian-held Kashmir.

39. The Meeting expressed its strong support to the ongoing peace process between Pakistan and India, and urged both countries to make it "irreversible" and result-oriented. The Meeting encouraged the two sides to maintain regular contacts at the highest level and to implement the agreed confidence-building measures (CBMs), including steps to ameliorate the lives of the Kashmiri people, promotion of bilateral trade, and people to people contact, in order to foster improvement of relations between the two countries. The Meeting called upon the OIC and the United Nations to help the peace process by all possible means.

40. The Meeting, having taken note of the Joint Declaration of India and Pakistan after the meeting which was held between the President of Pakistan and the Prime Minister of India in New York on 24 September 2004 and in New Delhi on 18 April 2005, stressed that ongoing dialogue process should lead to sustentative progress for the resolution of the core dispute of Jammu and Kashmir in accordance with the aspirations of the Kashmiri people, and their association with the dialogue process.

41. The Meeting expressed its serious concern on the building of the fence along the Line of Control (LOC) in occupied Kashmir by India in contravention of international and bilateral agreements. The Meeting called upon the international community, particularly the United Nations and United Nations Military Observer Group in India and Pakistan (UNMOGIP) to take note of the Indian actions and ensure respect and implementation of all international and bilateral agreements on LOC.

42. The Meeting endorsed the recommendations of the OIC Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir. It also took note of the memorandum presented by the True Representatives of the Kashmiri People to the Contact Group and reaffirmed the OIC's commitment to promote a just and peaceful solution of the Jammu and Kashmir dispute.

43. The Meeting emphasized its full solidarity with the Republic of the Sudan in laying the foundations of peace and stability all over the country, to achieve national reconciliation, and to defend its sovereignty, unity, independence and territorial integrity. It also affirmed its support for Sudan's request of an investigation into the destruction of Al-Shifa Factory in Khartoum in 1998 by the United States of America.

44. The Meeting called on the international community to honour its commitments in the Oslo Donor Conference for Reconstruction of the Sudan with a view to establishing the foundations of peace in the country. It called on the General Secretariat to speedily implement the resolution of the Tenth Islamic Summit Conference on the Establishment of a Fund for the Reconstruction and Development of war-stricken regions in the Sudan. It also urged Member States, the Islamic Development Bank and financing institutions of Member States to provide urgent assistance to the Sudan in order to support its efforts aimed at addressing the humanitarian situation in Darfur.

45. The Meeting decided to support the African Union's efforts to end the conflict in Darfur, and stressed the readiness of the OIC to contribute to these efforts. The Meeting hailed the cooperation of the Government of the Sudan with the United Nations and the African Union in addressing the humanitarian and security situation in Darfur. It also commended the peace efforts of the Sudanese Government and its willingness to find a peaceful solution to the conflict in Darfur. The Meeting welcomed the resumption of negotiations in Abuja between the Sudanese Government and armed movements in the region.

46. The Meeting reaffirmed its commitment to a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the situation in Somalia, while reaffirming its respect for the sovereignty, territorial integrity, political independence and unity of the country, consistent with the principles of the Charter of the United Nations. The Meeting called on all States to respect the aforementioned sovereignty of Somalia and to refrain from interfering in its internal affairs. It welcomed the positive outcome of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) led peace process for Somalia and the formation of federal institutions of governance.

47. The Meeting further welcomed the relocation of the Transitional Federal Institutions (TFIs). It urged further progress in this regard and encouraged Somali leaders to continue to work towards reconciliation through dialogue and consensus building within the framework of the Transitional Federal Institutions. It also welcomed the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council to speed up preparations for the deployment of an African Union Peace Support Mission for Somalia in accordance with Security Council Presidential Statement PRST/2005/32. It called on the international community to recognize and support the Government and to extend urgent financial support so as to enable it to consolidate security, stability, complete national reconciliation and re-establish, the basic structures of governance for Somalia.

48. The Meeting expressed satisfaction with the major developmental and humanitarian activities of the OIC Funds for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for Sierra Leone in furtherance of the spirit of solidarity and cooperation within the Islamic World. It urged Member States, the Islamic Development Bank and the Islamic Solidarity Fund to support the Funds and make use of them when it comes to implementing their projects meant for Bosnia and Herzegovina and for Sierra Leone.

49. The Meeting recalled resolution 23/32-P, adopted at the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers, held in Sana'a, Yemen, in June 2005, and reiterated its deep concern about the dire famine and drought situation in Niger. It appealed to the Member States and Islamic financial institutions to provide urgent food and humanitarian assistance to the people of Niger.

50. The Meeting recalled the UN Security Council's resolution 1506 of 12 September 2003 to finally lift sanctions imposed on the Great Socialist People's Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, and called for the lifting of the remaining unilateral sanctions imposed on the Jamahiriya as a means of political coercion that contravenes UN resolutions.

51. The Meeting emphasized that UN sanctions should not be used for political motivations and reaffirmed that no State should use or encourage the use of UN sanctions as well as unilateral economic, political or any other measure to coerce another State in order to subordinate the exercise of its sovereign rights.

52. The Meeting further deplored all arbitrary political, legal, economic and other unilateral coercive measures and urged those States that have imposed such coercive measures and any other pressures upon any OIC Member State to end these subjective measures, as they contravene the objectives and principles of the United Nations Charter and of the international law.

53. The Meeting reiterated its condemnation of the continuing aggression by the Republic of Armenia against the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Republic of Azerbaijan, which constitutes a blatant violation of the principles of the United Nations Charter and international law. It called for total, unconditional and immediate withdrawal of the Armenian forces from all occupied territories of Azerbaijan. The Meeting supported the efforts of the

Republic of Azerbaijan to build on the results of the meetings held within the framework of the Prague process on the peaceful settlement of conflicts.

54. The Meeting reiterated its determination to support the efforts of the Government of Azerbaijan aimed at eliminating the impediments to the peace process emerged in result of the illegal activities of Armenia carried out in the occupied territories of Azerbaijan, such as the transfer of settlers of Armenian nationality, practices of artificial geographic, cultural and demographic alternations, illicit economic activity, and exploitation of natural resources in these occupied territories. The Meeting urged all Member States to continue strengthening their solidarity with the people of Azerbaijan and supporting its just cause. To this end, the Member States agreed to extend their full support to endeavours of Azerbaijan aimed at utilizing the potential of the United Nations, including through the cooperation of the latter with relevant regional international organizations, to achieve soonest restoration of complete sovereignty and territorial integrity of Azerbaijan.

55. The Meeting expressed its firm support for the rightful cause of the Muslim Turkish Cypriots; reiterated its decision to put an end within the context of the call made by the United Nations Secretary-General in his report of 28 May 2004 as well as the previous OIC resolutions to the unjust isolation of Turkish Cypriots, and strongly called upon the international community to take, without further delay, concrete steps to end this isolation. Recalling that the United Nations Plan aimed to establish a new state of affairs in Cyprus in the form of a new bi-zonal partnership with two equal constituent states, the Meeting acknowledged that neither side may claim authority or jurisdiction over the other and that the Greek Cypriots do not represent the Turkish Cypriots. Through Resolution 5/32-P adopted by the 32nd Session of the Islamic Conference of Foreign Ministers (ICFM) in June 2005, the Meeting once again urged the Member States to closely associate with the Turkish Cypriots and to increase and expand their relations in all fields; encouraged the Member States to exchange high-level visits with the Turkish Cypriot side. The Meeting also urged the Member States to inform the OIC General Secretariat of the actions taken regarding the implementation of the OIC resolutions and in particular resolutions No.2/31-P and 5/32-P.

56. The Meeting reaffirmed the imperative of promoting multilateral diplomacy in resolving disarmament and non-proliferation concerns, and, in this context, underlined that treaty-based multilateral institutions established under the auspices of the United Nations are the sole legitimate bodies to verify and ensure compliance with relevant international agreements.

57. The Meeting, while noting the adoption of the United Nations Security Council resolution 1540 of 28 April 2004, whose scope is limited to preventing the acquisition of weapons of mass destruction by non-state actors, underscored that this was a temporary arrangement to fill a gap in international rules. It also underlined that the Security Council cannot assume legislative responsibilities in matters pertaining to non-proliferation and disarmament issues, since those States which seek to perpetuate the monopoly of nuclear weapons also wield the power of the veto in the Council. In this regard, the Meeting called for concluding a non-discriminatory and universally negotiated

international treaty on the threat of WMD proliferation by non-State actors which should replace the temporary arrangements assumed by the Security Council under resolution 1540.

58. The Meeting urged all parties directly concerned to consider seriously taking practical and urgent steps required for implementing the proposal to establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in the region of the Middle East in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the United Nations, and warned against the dire consequences of the continuing rejection of Israel to accede to the Nuclear Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and to place promptly all its nuclear facilities under the full scope of the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In this regard, the Meeting supported the draft resolution submitted by the Syrian Arab Republic to the Security Council on 29 December 2003 regarding the establishment of a zone free from all weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East and called upon the Security Council to act positively on the draft to achieve that lofty goal in the region.

59. The Meeting, while noting the IAEA Director-General's report on Implementation of the NPT Safeguards Agreement in the Islamic Republic of Iran (GOV/2004/83) in which he confirmed that "all the declared nuclear material in Iran has been accounted for, and therefore such material is not diverted to prohibited activities", reaffirmed the inalienable right of all Members States, including the Islamic Republic of Iran, to develop their nuclear capabilities for peaceful purposes in accordance with the provisions of the Non-Proliferation Treaty and the Statute of the IAEA.

60. The Meeting reaffirmed its resolve to combat all forms and manifestations of terrorism, including state terrorism, and its determination to participate in the multilateral global efforts to eradicate this menace, rejected selectivity and double standards in combating terrorism, and any attempts to link terrorism to a specific religion, culture, community or country. It also reiterated its support for the convening of an international conference under the aegis of the United Nations to define terrorism and stress the need for efforts to be exerted to conclude a comprehensive convention on international terrorism that would differentiate between terrorism and legitimate struggle of people under colonial or alien domination and foreign occupation for self-determination in accordance with the United Nations Charter and international law. The Meeting reaffirmed that situations of foreign occupation are governed by international humanitarian law and not by conventions on terrorism; it also called upon all Member States, who have not done so, to take the necessary steps towards the ratification of the OIC Convention on Combating International Terrorism. The Meeting also reaffirmed its support and backing of the Riyadh Declaration issued by the International Counter Terrorism Conference which was held in February 2005, as well as all the recommendations of the Conference, including the creation of an International Counter-Terrorism Centre, and the establishment of a task force for follow-up and examination of all recommendations under the aegis of the United Nations.

61. The Meeting emphasized that promoting dialogue among civilizations and enhancing tolerance are among the most important elements in advancing international cooperation for eradication of the scourge of terrorism.

62. The Meeting recalled the decisions adopted by the Thirteenth Summit of Non Aligned Countries, held in Kuala Lumpur (Malaysia), and the Second Ordinary Session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Maputo (Mozambique), regarding Tunisia's proposal to elaborate by consensus an international counter-terrorism code of conduct within the framework of the United Nations. The Meeting endorsed this initiative and appealed to all Member States of the United Nations and international organizations to support it and contribute to its realization when it is tabled before the United Nations General Assembly.

63. The Meeting stressed the importance of enhancing the solidarity and cohesion in the voting patterns at the United Nations organs on issues of mutual concern to the OIC Member States in accordance with the relevant resolutions of the OIC Summits and Ministerial Conferences. In this context, the Ministers instructed their ambassadors and representatives to the United Nations and its organs to strictly observe this important tenet which upholds the credibility and integrity of the OIC.

64. The Meeting underlined the need for evolving common perceptions and agreed approaches to address both the new and existing threats to international peace and security in the context of multilateralism. In this regard, while underscoring that the process of UN reform should not take place at the expense of the UN principles, the Meeting emphasized the need for cooperative multilateralism to pursue and promote the UN Charter principles. The Meeting, also, reiterated the OIC's stance in support of the principle of the United Nations reform, including the expansion of the Security Council's membership, in accordance with the United Nations General Assembly resolutions, and taking into consideration the principles of sovereign equality of all States and the need to ensure equitable geographic distribution. It also stressed an increased role of regional groups in nomination of their representatives to serve on the Council. The Meeting called for a comprehensive reform of the Security Council in all its aspects so as to make it more democratic, representative, transparent and accountable. It also recognized that there was a wide support for increasing the number of non-permanent members in the Security Council. It decided that any reform proposal which neglect the adequate representation of the Islamic Ummah in any category of membership in an extended Security Council will not be acceptable to the Islamic World.

65. The Meeting expressed its determination to vigorously pursue the promotion and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms and encouraged greater transparency, cooperation, mutual tolerance and respect for religious values and cultural diversity in the field of universal promotion and protection of human rights. It recalled General Assembly resolution 58/167 of 22 December 2003 on human rights and cultural diversity which emphasized that the promotion of cultural pluralism and tolerance at the national, regional and international levels is important for enhancing respect for cultural rights and cultural diversity. It also reiterated the necessity of following up on the Cairo Declaration on Human Rights in Islam, and called upon all the Member States to continue their coordination and cooperation in the area of human rights in the relevant international fora with the view to enhance Islamic

solidarity in confronting attempts to use human rights as a means to politically pressurize any of the Member States.

66. The Meeting expressed its opposition to the practice of submitting country-specific resolutions on human rights situations which are selectively targeting developing and Islamic countries. It reaffirmed that this practice is one of the main reasons that transforms the work of human rights bodies into an extremely political exercise rather than contributes to the advancement of the cause of human rights.

67. The Meeting underlined that human rights is a crucial aspect of the work of the United Nations, and while expressing concern on the fact that the UN human rights system has so far suffered from problems such as politicization and political manipulation through gross selectivity and application double standards, emphasized that to restore the credibility of the human rights machinery and to best combine its efficiency with legitimacy, concrete steps must be taken to reduce selective approaches.

68. The Meeting underlined the essential prerequisite of following a uniform approach on all aspects of United Nations reform and achieving the expansion of the Security Council with the broadest possible consensus. In this context, the Meeting stressed the initiation of constructive negotiation between all United Nations Member States, to refrain from pushing divisive votes, without imposing any time limits. It called for and to building upon the points of convergence such as the need to enlarge the Council, to increase the representation of developing countries, and to improve the working methods and transparency of the Council's work.

69. The Meeting, while taking note of the United Nations Secretary-General and the President of the General Assembly's proposal on transformation of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights to a Human Rights Council, called for establishing an open-ended inter-governmental working group to discuss all related aspects of the proposal. It stressed, however, that any proposal for reforming the human rights machinery of the United Nations should be based on the principles of sovereign equality of States and the need to ensure equitable geographic distribution.

70. The Meeting agreed that the General Assembly representing universal membership, in accordance with United Nations Charter must be enabled to exercise its authority in addressing all major issues, including peace and security, development and human rights. The Meeting further called for halting and reversing the encroachment by the Security Council on the Assembly's prerogatives and functions.

71. The Meeting, recognizing the central role of the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) in the promotion of socio-economic development, called for its transformation into an effective policy dialogue platform, to use its mechanism for monitoring the implementation of the agreed development goals, as an effective development forum and strengthening its role in the prevention of conflicts through development support. In this context, the

Meeting appreciated the proposal made by the President of the ECOSOC to further strengthen the coordinating role of the ECOSOC.

72. The Meeting emphasized the importance of the second phase of the World Summit on the Information Society to be held in Tunis from 16 to 18 November 2005, following the first phase held in Geneva in December 2003, and the importance of integrating the two phases of this Summit as interrelated stages in the examination of optimal ways to bridge the digital gap between developing countries and industrial ones. It called on Member States to participate actively in the preparatory work for the second stage of this Summit and to prepare an effective partnership plan to establish a balanced information society.

73. The Meeting reaffirmed the need to strengthen the role and capacity of the United Nations system to assist developing countries' efforts to achieve the internationally-agreed development goals, including those contained in the Millennium Declaration.

74. The Meeting emphasized the need for the promotion of the new global human order aimed at reversing the growing disparity between the rich and poor, both among and within countries through, inter alia, the eradication of poverty, the promotion of sustainable development, and the realization of the just aspiration of all peoples.

75. The Meeting reiterated that the pursuance of sustainable development should be the priority of all countries through the implementation of all internationally-agreed development goals and objectives at all levels, including those contained in the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the Millennium Declaration, (and) the Brussels Programme of Action, and the Almaty Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries, and stressed that the multilateral trading and financial systems should be open, equitable, rule-based, non-discriminatory and sensitive to Least Developed Countries (LDCs) situation. In this context, it urged the international community to facilitate the accession of those OIC Member States that seek to join the World Trade Organization (WTO) on fair terms, irrespective of political considerations.

76. The Meeting urged the developed countries that have not done so, to materialize the target of 0.7% of GNP for official development assistance by the end of 2006, in order to enable the developing countries to meet the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), as set by 2015.

77. The Meeting welcomed the initiative of Malaysia to establish a Capacity-Building Programme aimed at poverty alleviation in less-developed and low-income countries and welcomed the launching of the Programme on 29 March 2005 in Kuala Lumpur by the Prime Minister of Malaysia, Dato' Seri Abdullah Ahmad Badawi, with three pilot projects having been identified for implementation in the first place, one each in Bangladesh, Mauritania and Sierra Leone.

78. The Meeting recalled the adoption of the United Nations General Assembly resolution 57/337 of 3 July 2003 on the "Prevention of Armed Conflict" which reaffirmed the inadmissibility of the acquisition of territory by force and the need to bring an end to situations of foreign occupation as a commitment by the international community to promote the culture of conflict prevention.

79. The Meeting called on United Nations Member States for the full implementation of the resolutions and the decisions of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) concerning the return of cultural properties to the peoples who were or still under colonial rule or foreign occupation. It also stressed the need for UNESCO to identify the stolen or illegally exported cultural properties in accordance with the relevant conventions on the subject. It emphasized the need to expedite the process of returning these properties to their countries of origin, in compliance with the resolutions of the United Nations General Assembly. It further emphasized the right of the Islamic countries to maintain and conserve their national heritage, as it constitutes the foundation of the cultural identity of these countries.

80. The Meeting expressed utmost appreciation for H.E. Dr. Mustapha Othman Ismael, Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of the Sudan on the occasion of the end of his mandate. The Meeting also appreciated his invaluable initiatives and his outstanding role in activating the OIC activities and promoting Joint Islamic Action throughout his mandate as a Foreign Minister.

81. The Meeting expressed appreciation and satisfaction for the performance of the Permanent Observer Mission of the OIC to the United Nations in New York in discharging its duties in conformity with the resolutions of the OIC Summit and Ministerial Conferences.

82. The Meeting adopted the reports issued by:

I- The Six-Member Committee on Palestine (Annex – I).
II- The Contact Group on Jammu and Kashmir (Annex-II.
III- The Contact Group on Somalia (Annex-III).
IV- The Contact Group on Sierra Leone (Annex-IV).
V- The Open-ended Working Group on UN Reform (Annex-V).